

Message Text

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PAGE 01 OTTAWA 02160 102139Z

13

ACTION SCI-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 IO-14 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-10

NSAE-00 PA-04 RSC-01 USIA-15 PRS-01 SP-03 COME-00

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FM AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3944

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

USMISSION IAEA VIENNA

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

USAEC GERMANTOWN

C O N F I D E N T I A L OTTAWA 2160

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: TECH, ENRG, UK, CA

SUBJECT: UK NUCLEAR REACTOR PROGRAM GOES HEAVY WATER.

1. LORNE GRAY, PRESIDENT OF AECL, RECEIVED SURPRISE CALL FROM UK AEA CHAIRMAN HILL MORNING OF JULY 9 INDICATING CRYPTICALLY THAT ANNOUNCEMENT WOULD BE MADE JULY 10 CONCERNING UK DECISION ON REACTOR TYPE FOR ITS FUTURE NUCLEAR POWER REACTOR STATIONS IF GRAY COULD MAKE IT TO LONDON FOR ANNOUNCEMENT. AS OUTLINED TO GRAY AT THAT TIME, DECISION WOULD BE FOR THE HEAVY WATER TYPE REACTOR.

2. SUBSEQUENT DETAILS REMAIN SOMEWHAT SKETCHY BUT IN TELECON WITH HIS HEADQUARTERS THIS MORNING AFTER ANNOUNCEMENT MADE IN LONDON, GRAY INDICATED THAT THE UK WOULD BUILD SGHWR'S (STEAM GENERATING HEAVY WATER REACTORS). STATIONS WILL BE MODELLED ON SHGWR PROTOTYPE WHICH REQUIRED FIVE YEARS FOR CONSTRUCTION. UK HOPES TO EQUAL OR BETTER THIS SCHEDULE ON PRODUCTION UNITS. UK WILL BE LOOKING TO COLLABORATE WITH AECL ON FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF SGHWR TYPE AND FOR INITIAL ASSISTANCE IN HEAVY WATER PRODUCTION TECHNOLOGY.

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PAGE 02 OTTAWA 02160 102139Z

3. NO INFORMATION IS CURRENTLY AVAILABLE CONCERNING THE GOC'S

PROPOSAL THAT UK AND CANADA FORM CONSORTIUM TO MARKET INTERNATIONALLY A LINE OF HEAVY WATER REACTORS WHICH WOULD CONSIST OF SGHWR, AND CANDU PRESSURIZED AND BOILING PLANTS.

4. ADDRESSEES WILL RECALL THAT UK EXPERIENCED CONSIDERABLE DIFFICULTY BOTH IN DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM AND INITIAL PROTOTYPE OPERATIONS WITH SGHWR FUEL. AECL FUEL ENGINEERS INDICATE THAT UK AUTHORITIES FEEL THEY HAVE THIS PROBLEM WELL IN HAND. PRIVATELY, HOWEVER, CANADIANS HAVE SOME RESERVATIONS ABOUT UK JUDGMENT IN THIS RESPECT. ADDITIONAL DETAILS WILL BE PROVIDED BY AIR POUCH AS THEY BECOME AVAILABLE. PORTER

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Message Attributes

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